



Capitol
NEWS

State Senator Martha G. Scott

LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION FOR MY CONSTITUENTS IN THE 2ND DISTRICT

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to once again be able to represent the 2nd State Senate District in Lansing. Redistricting has changed the shape of our Senate district, so this newsletter will be my first introduction to some of you.

Inside you will find articles on bills that I have introduced, my committee assignments, my district coffee hours schedule, and a discussion of the state's current budget situation. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or thoughts you have on these matters or any other issues that concern you. I can be a better legislator when I know how you feel about what my colleagues and I are doing in Lansing.

I would also like to take this opportunity to introduce the members of my staff. Ron Hicks is my Chief of Staff. Ron's duties include working with me on legislation, attending committee meetings, and helping me stay in touch with my constituents in the district. Jessie Weston is my Office Manager. When you call my Lansing office, Jessie will most often be the person you first talk to. Jessie also keeps my schedule

and helps make sure that I have the information I need when I attend district events. If you would like to schedule an appointment to meet with me, please call Jessie. Robert Davis is my Legislative Assistant and helps me with research on issues and legislation. Jacqueline Steingold is my District Staffer. Jacqueline attends events with me and meets with people in the district.

We are all here to help you as much as we possibly can. If you have any questions, if you are having trouble getting state services, or if you have ideas for legislation, please call my office. We will be happy to talk with you, and we will always do our best to help you.

Martha G. Scott • State Senator • 2nd District



Senator Scott is joined by staff members Jessie Weston, Robert Davis and Ron Hicks, on the far right.

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Scott Wants Affordable Employee Health Care

Health care costs are a struggle for everyone. In an ideal world, all employers would provide health insurance coverage for their employees. But not every employer can afford to do that. That is why I have introduced legislation to provide a tax credit to individuals who pay for a part or

all of their health insurance coverage. A tax credit for out-of-pocket health insurance expenses will make a difference for families struggling to pay these ever-increasing premiums. Senate Bill 155 allows taxpayers to claim a credit for part or all of the cost of a health

insurance policy that they must pay themselves. This tax credit will allow many Michigan workers and their families to see a doctor regularly and prevent more expensive health problems in the future. Senate Bill 155 has been referred to the Senate Committee on Finance.

Scott Reintroduces Payday Lending Bill

During this new legislative session, I am continuing my fight to help families who turn to payday lending businesses in a

time of need and then find that they have compounded their problems. As I did during the last Senate session, I have

introduced legislation to regulate these lenders. I have taken up this fight because I have heard personally from constituents who have used payday lenders and then found it nearly impossible to pay off their loans. The people who use payday loans are not people trying to cut corners, but hard-working people trying to keep up with their bills and provide for their families.

Senate Bill 21 would: license payday

loan businesses, allow a \$5 administrative fee on loans, allow a service fee that could not exceed the equivalent of a 25 percent annual interest rate, require that payday loan businesses carry a \$50,000 bond, and require that businesses file an annual report of their business activities.

Senate Bill 21 was referred to the Senate Committee on Banking and Financial Institutions.



Senator Scott speaks on her legislation on the floor of the Senate.

Protecting Our Children

Gun owners would have to keep their guns locked away or in a similar safe, secure place under legislation I recently introduced.

Far too many children are injured or killed when they play with guns that are not kept under lock and key. Senate Bill 65 would require that

guns be kept out of the reach of a minor by either: locking them in a box or container; keeping them in a secure place; or disabling them with trigger locks. Senate Bill 66 is a companion bill that contains sentencing guidelines for violation of the proposed new law.

I originally introduced this legislation in 1997, when I served in the House of Representatives, and I also introduced it in the Senate during the last session. I am reintroducing this legislation because I believe that we must do better by Michigan's

children. Senseless acts of gun violence are occurring in our schools at a record pace. My bill is a common-sense approach to keeping guns out of the hands of our children by requiring that guns be kept safe and secure in homes.

Scott Fights For Detroit

During this session, I will continue to fight for the rights of my Detroit constituents. I have recently introduced legislation to protect the voting rights of Detroit citizens by allowing them to cast a vote this year on the fate of the Detroit School Reform Board. I believe that Detroit parents have waited long enough to have a say in who leads their schools. Senate Bill 157 would eliminate the waiting period currently in law for a ballot proposal regarding the future of an appointed reform board in a district,

including Detroit, that meets certain qualifications. The question would be placed on the August Primary Election ballot. Senate Bill 157 has been referred to the Senate Committee on Education.

I have also sponsored a bill to help state employees who work in Detroit. Senate Bill 156 would require the Department of Management and Budget to conduct a study on parking at new locations and only relocate or reassign workers if parking spaces are available to accommodate each

worker. The department would also be prohibited from charging an employee a rate greater than what they paid for parking at their previous work site and from annually increasing fees higher than the consumer price index. Both restrictions would be retroactive to January 1, 2001, and would also cover the workers who were relocated to Cadillac Place. Those state employees found it difficult to locate affordable parking. My bill would ensure that

the Cadillac Place state employees, and any future state employees who are transferred to a new building, have accessible and affordable parking at their new work site.



Making Polluters Pay

Because our water resources are so important to our Michigan way of life, we must do everything possible to minimize water pollution and to get tougher with polluters. My Democratic colleagues and I recently took the first step in this fight by introducing Senate Bills 250-253, a package of water-quality protection bills in the State Senate.

Taken together, these bills hold accountable the companies that discharge pollutants into our waterways through heightened enforcement, implementation, and monitoring of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination

System (NPDES) in Michigan. My bill, Senate Bill 253, establishes an NPDES permit application fee of \$1,000. The revenue generated by this permit fee will be used to ensure compliance with applicable federal and state laws and regulations. Michigan is currently one of only eight states nationwide, and one of only two Great Lakes states, that does not charge for these required permits.

The Clean Water Act of 1972 prohibits anyone from discharging pollutants into a waterway of the United States unless they have a permit. Michigan is authorized by the United States Environmental Protection Agency to administer the NPDES

program. Businesses must obtain an NPDES permit from the state of Michigan before discharging any pollutant into Michigan waterways.

This water-quality legislation would get the State of Michigan out of the business of subsidizing polluters and send a strong and clear message that we are serious about keeping our water clean for Michigan citizens. Charging a fee for NPDES permits was also one of the recommendations of the Senate Great Lakes Conservation Task Force's 2002 final report—*The Citizens Agenda...An Action Plan to Protect the Great Lakes*.

In addition to my bill, the other bills in the package would: create a water-quality fund that would be used for the administration and enforcement of the state's wastewater permit program and its water-quality monitoring; change the NPDES permit process to require that any business applying for a permit first show that it has taken all reasonable efforts to prevent or decrease pollution; and create an annual wastewater discharge fee taking into account the pollutants, their concentrations and quantity, and the quality of the water into which they are discharged.

State Faces Tight Budget

The Governor's budget, which she submitted to the Legislature in early March, focuses on helping Michigan families and children while still living within our means.

The first action taken by the Governor to address our budget problems earlier this year, a prorated cut in education funding, was mandated by law. The school aid fund law requires that this kind of action be taken in a budget crisis.

Even in these tough times, the Governor's budget proposal keeps the foundation allowance at \$6,700 per pupil. The budget proposal also keeps many programs, including the School Readiness Program for 4-year-olds; the School Breakfast

Program; teacher preparedness programs to allow Michigan to comply with the federal No Child Left Behind Act; and funding for the Office of School Excellence, which provides curriculum services, early childhood and parenting services, and learning support services.

The budget proposal would find more money for the Elder Prescription Insurance Coverage program (EPIC) by applying for additional federal funding. The budget proposal continues funding for the state's welfare-to-work program at current levels, while providing additional funding for the child day care program. This will help those families who need day

care services if they are to find or keep their jobs.

The proposed budget recognizes that we are living in troubled times and so we need strong public safety programs. The Governor proposes to fund a new State Trooper School through the creation of a Traffic Enforcement and Safety Fund. A modest increase in driver's license fees will help offset the costs of the trooper school and other state trooper costs to keep our state safer for all of us.

The proposed budget includes more than \$2 billion for higher education, while also asking public universities and

community colleges to tighten their budgets. The budget proposes to restructure financial

aid and target those students with a demonstrated financial need through the Michigan Opportunity Scholarships.

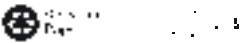
To strengthen the state's finances, we must deal with some limitations so that we can still meet the most crucial needs of Michigan citizens while resolving our budget deficits. My colleagues and I will now begin the task of reviewing the Governor's proposals and writing appropriations bills to fund state departments and those services that are crucial to the well-being of Michigan's citizens.





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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Sen. Scott Announces Coffee Schedule



Every Monday, I will hold coffee hours in local restaurants in one of the communities of the 2nd Senate District. These coffee hours will give you an opportunity to meet with me and discuss state issues, legislation, and community issues that you think state officials should pay more attention to. They will be held between 8:30 a.m and 9:30 a.m. My coffee hour schedule is as follows:

Detroit: First Monday of every month at McDonald's, 10400 Gratiot, Detroit.	Hamtramck: Second Monday of every month at The Urban Break Coffee House, 10020 Joseph Campau, Hamtramck.	Grosse Pointe/Harper Woods: Third Monday of every month at the Caribou Coffee Company, 19419 Mack Avenue, Grosse Pointe Woods.	Highland Park: Fourth Monday of every month at McDonald's, 14124 Woodward Avenue, Highland Park.
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I look forward to meeting with the citizens of the 2nd Senate District to discuss important issues concerning our area and the state. You do not need to make an appointment to talk with me during these coffee hours. I encourage you to please join me for coffee and a discussion of what matters most to our communities and our families.

Scott Serves Citizens On Appropriations Committee

I am pleased to have been appointed a member of the powerful Senate Appropriations Committee. As a member of this committee, I will help my colleagues write the bills that will appropriate money for state departments and the state programs that we rely on.

I also sit on four Appropriations Subcommittees that oversee budgets for state services and departments. I am a

member of the Subcommittees on K-12, School Aid, Education; Commerce, Labor and Economic Development; Family Independence Agency; and Retirement.

As you already know, the state is experiencing tough financial times. Governor Granholm recently submitted her 2003-2004 budget, and we will soon begin debate on her budget proposal. Just as many families have to rethink



their spending, the state also will have to budget carefully and find ways to trim spending. My job on the Appropriations

Committee is to help craft a responsible budget that will still meet the needs of the many citizens who rely on state services.